

Document Control

Every year Organization headquarters grinds out over 200 million pages of paperwork -- over 1,600 every minute. It is impossible to estimate what headquarters receives. Consider the problem of controlling this volume in a compartmented organization having dispersed headquarters buildings plus field installations. The conclusion is obvious; it is a major problem involving a major cost. Indeed, from the time a document is created until it is cremated it probably runs the full gamut of document control operations -- the receipting, numbering, logging, reviewing, abstracting, dating, time-stamping, coding, sorting, classifying, cover-sheeting, routing, and filing.

These control measures, of course, have their place in the Organization. But when their overuse or complexity unnecessarily increases clerical costs, or delays decisions and actions vital to both headquarters and the field, a close look into the causes of the trouble is needed. For example, a recent Governmentwide study pointed up that a problem generally exists if:

1. An excessive amount of time (from two to four hours depending on the size and physical layout of the component) elapses between the receipt of a document in a registry and its delivery to the action desk.
2. All initial control operations (including routing) for one document take more than five minutes.
3. More than 15 percent of the total incoming documents receive control processing in addition to that required for security purposes.
4. A routing slip or control form is placed on virtually every incoming or outgoing document.

When these danger signs show up it's a safe bet that document control measures (exclusive of those required for security control) exceed those really needed to answer these questions about documents that call for action or decision:

1. Has a particular document been received, and if so, to whom and when was it sent for action?
2. Has a particular document been released, and if so, what action was taken and to whom and when was it sent?

These questions can be quickly and simply answered by three forms available in headquarters or the field. These are: Form 779, Locator and Control Record, (headquarters and field); Form 238, Document Control, (headquarters only); Form 240, Courier Receipt and Log Record (headquarters only). All three are multipart forms designed to provide at one writing enough copies to meet several needs at different control points. Here's how these forms work:

1. Forms 779 and 238 are six-part sets printed on NCR (No Carbon Required) paper. The six parts provide copies for logging and cross-referencing at the registry level and at subordinate points. The 3" x 5" slips not only eliminate the need for log books, but also provide a ready communications medium for notifying a central registry of the disposition of a document at a subordinate point. The file locator reference to the document can also be shown on Form 238.

2. Form 240 is a four-part carbon interleaved set. At one writing, copies of the form are made for addressing, receipting, and logging of classified material transmitted within headquarters through the courier system. The form meets all security requirements for logging material classified up through SECRET.

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3. Form 240 is also designed for use with the new headquarters Chain Envelope. This envelope has been approved for transmitting within headquarters material classified up through SECRET. It may also be used as the outer wrapper for double wrapped material, except that which is classified TOP SECRET. In addition to meeting these security requirements, the new envelopes offer these advantages:

Save time - You can address an envelope and attach a receipt in one operation. Simply insert the receipt in the window pocket on the face of the envelope. If a courier receipt is not needed, insert a 3" x 5" card or slip of paper and write in the address.

Save money - These envelopes may be used repeatedly.

Save safe space - Safe space will not be needed for used envelopes since names and addresses will not appear on them.

The Organization, vitally concerned about the effect of document controls on the timeliness of decisions reaching the field, has included the improvement of these controls in the objectives of its Records Management Program. Guidance may be obtained from your Records Officer, and also in headquarters from the Records Management Staff.

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